

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-14 and the specification are amended. Claims 1-14 are amended for form, as requested in the Office Action. Support for amendment to claim 1 can be found, for example, in Fig. 1. The instant specification is amended for form as requested in the Office Action. Thus, no new matter is added.

I. Declaration

The Declaration is objected to because the Office Action asserts that the Declaration does not identify the citizenship of each inventor. Applicant respectfully submits a fully executed Declaration that includes the citizenship of each inventor will be filed in a Supplemental Response.

II. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The specification is objected to because of informalities. By this Amendment, the specification is amended to correct the informalities according to the Office Action's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objection is thus respectfully requested.

III. Claim Objections

Claims 1-14 are objected to because of informalities. By this Amendment, claims 1-14 are amended to correct the informalities according to the Office Action's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objection is thus respectfully requested.

IV. §112 Rejection of Claim 9

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out whether the "pair of compression links" recited in claim 9 is the same "pair of compression links" recited in claim 1. By this Amendment, claim 9 is amended to cancel "one pair of compression links." Therefore, the rejection to claim 9 is moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

V. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 1-7 and 9-12 Over Stammreich

Claims 1-7 and 9-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,743,052 to Stammreich et al. ("Stammreich"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Stammreich does teach or suggest every feature of claims 1-7 and 9-12. Stammreich does not disclose "a single operating member pivoting about an end pin situated on the hook . . . an intermediate pin located on the operating member, the intermediate pin being positioned between the main pin and the end pin," as recited in amended independent claim 1 (emphasis added). According to the current application, a single rotation movement of the operating member is sufficient for disengaging the hook from the keeper. As discussed below, the current application can be operated in a much simpler manner than the hook of Stammreich.

The Office Action, referring to Fig. 3 of Stammreich, asserts that Stammreich discloses "an operating member 20 pivoting about an end pin 78 situated at the opposite end from the curved end of the hook," (see Office Action, page 5). This assertion is respectfully traversed.

Stammreich merely discloses a hook 50 that is attached on the links 70A and 70B, the links being attached on the operating member 20 (see Stammreich, Fig. 1A). The operation of the hook of Stammreich is not made directly by the operating member 20, but through the links 70a, 70b. In Stammreich, the operating member has to be blocked relatively to the links by pins 46 with link detents 79 (see Stammreich, column 5, lines 45-65). Thus, Stammreich does not disclose "a single operating member pivoting about an end pin situated on the hook," as recited in amended independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

Thus, for at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is patentable over Stammreich. Further, claims 2-7 and 9-12, which depend from independent claim 1, are also patentable over Stammreich for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

**B. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claim 8 Over
Stammreich In View of Bourne**

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Stammreich in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,984,382 to Bourne et al. ("Bourne"). Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Stammreich and Bourne, alone or in a permissible combination, do not teach or suggest every feature of claim 8. As discussed above, Stammreich does not teach or suggest the features of claim 1. Further, Bourne does not remedy the deficiencies of Stammreich. Bourne is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of "a ledge" that has a second pair of compression links.

Thus, claim 8 is patentable over Stammreich and Bourne for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, as well as for additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**C. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 13 and 14
Over Stammreich in View of Sessler**

Claims 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Stammreich in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,783,072 to Sessler ("Sessler"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Stammreich and Sessler, alone or in a permissible combination, do not teach or suggest every feature of claims 13 and 14. As discussed above, Stammreich does not teach or suggest the features of claim 1. Further, Sessler does not remedy the deficiencies of

Stammreich. Sessler is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of "operating member includes a window."

Thus, for at least these reasons, claims 13 and 14 are patentable Stammreich and Sessler for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

D. Bourne and Henrichs

The Office Action, on page 9, asserts that Bourne could support a rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). The Office Action further asserts that EP 0,431,769 to Henrichs ("Henrichs") could support a rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). These assertions are respectfully traversed.

Bourne does not disclose every feature of independent claim 1. For example, Bourne does not disclose "a single operating member," as recited in claim 1. On the contrary, Bourne discloses a latch that includes two operating members: an inner handle and an outer handle (see Bourne, column 2, lines 1-10). Thus, Bourne does not teach or suggest every feature of amended independent claim 1.

Henrichs also does not teach or suggest every feature of independent claim 1. For example, Henrichs does not disclose "the hook is located between (emphasis added) the operating member and the main pin," as recited in amended claim 1. In Henrichs, the main pin extends through a hole in the hook (see Henrichs, column 3, lines 30-40). Thus, Henrichs does not disclose a hook that is "located between the operating member and the main pin," as recited in claim 1 (see Henrichs, column 3, lines 30-40).

Further, Henrichs does not disclose "at least one compression link is provided with a guide means capable of contacting that surface of the hook," as recited in amended independent claim 1 (emphasis added). As discussed above, in Henrichs, the main pin

extends through the hole in the hook, and thus cannot contact the surface of the hook and cannot serve as a guide means for a compression link.

Thus, for at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is also patentable over Bourne and Henrichs. Further, claims 2-8, which depend from independent claim 1, are also patentable over Bourne and Henrichs for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-14 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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